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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANTS: Weiss
SERIAL NO.: 10/648,912
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ART UNIT: 3612
EXAMINER: Pedder, Dennis H.
FOR: Guide Mechanism for a Cover of a Sliding/Tilting Vehicle Roof

M/S Appeal Brief - Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

APPEAL BRIEF

Dear Sir:

Appellant submits this Appeal Brief pursuant to the Notice of Appeal filed December 28, 2004. Enclosed is a check for the appeal brief fee. Any additional fees or credits may be charged or applied to Deposit Account No. 50-1482 in the name of Carlson, Gaskey & Olds.

REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is ArvinMeritor GmbH, assignee of the present invention.

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RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no prior or pending appeals, interferences or judicial proceedings related to this appeal, or which may directly affect or may be directly affected by, or have a bearing on, the Board's decision in this appeal.

STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-8, 10-17, and 19 are pending in the application including independent claims 1, 11, 13, and 19. Claims 9, 18, and 20-21 are cancelled. Claims 11, 12, and 19 are allowed. Claims 1-8, 10, and 13-17 stand rejected and appealed.

STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

All amendments have been entered.

SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

Generally, the present invention is directed to a cover of a sliding/tilting roof of a vehicle having at least one movable slotted guide that is at least indirectly coupled to the cover and that causes the cover to move vertically. The present invention also includes at least one profiled rail for horizontal shifting of the slotted guide between a raised position, an initial position, and a lowered position together with the cover along the profiled rail. In the raised position, the slotted guide is directly locked with the profiled rail with a positive fit, preventing horizontal displacement of the slotted guide in the direction of displacement. In the guide mechanism according to one embodiment of the invention, the slotted guide engages directly in the profiled

rail and is positively locked therein to attain a very short force flow path and little susceptibility to cumulative tolerances. In addition, it may be possible to reduce the number of components or to design components to exhibit reduced stability, resulting in a lower weight of the guide mechanism. See paragraph [19].

In the area of the rear edge of the cover, there is usually provided a drain gutter extending transversely to the vehicle, which is likewise shifted along the profiled rail when the cover is shifted. According to one embodiment of the invention, the drain gutter is connected with a rear bearing part that is adapted to be shifted along the profiled rail, but may also be integrally connected with the bearing part. In the raised position the bearing part and the drain gutter are fully decoupled from the slotted guide in the horizontal direction of displacement and have a separate arrangement for being locking in position. This allows the inventive structure to completely omit the intermediate lever used in prior art structures, which is normally used to provide for a permanent coupling between the slotted guide and the drain gutter in the prior art. This provides for a reduction in fitting space required, lower weight and fewer individual parts. See paragraph [26].

The invention will now be described in greater detail below with respect to the drawings. Figure 1 illustrates one embodiment of the inventive guide mechanism for a cover 10 of a sliding/tilting roof of a vehicle in a view from the side of the vehicle. The guide mechanism serves to bring the cover 10 into the different positions, namely, the raised position, the initial position (also referred to as closed position), and the lowered position, in which the cover together with the entire guide mechanism is moved to the rear to dive under the roof. Reference

numeral 11 denotes a roof edge defining a roof cutout. Reference numeral 12 denotes a rear edge of the cover 10, which is shown schematically only. See paragraph [28].

The guide mechanism comprises a C-shaped profiled rail 14 on either side of the roof cutout, which is rigidly secured at the edge of the roof cutout. A lever in the form of a slotted guide 16 is made of a single-component plastic material and is indirectly or directly coupled to the cover 10. The slotted guide 16 is attached to allow swiveling movement in a front guide shoe 18 at the opposite end. The swiveling axis of the slotted guide 16 is denoted by the reference letter A in Figure 1. The slotted guide 16 has a guide track 20 on each of its two side faces, with both guide tracks 20 having an identical design so that it is sufficient to illustrate only one of them. See paragraph [29].

A sliding block 22 in the form of a guide block runs inside each guide track 20 and is adapted to be shifted by means of a rear guide shoe 24. The rear guide shoe 24 is adapted for horizontal shifting movement via a cable drive mechanism. The front and rear guide shoes 18, 24 are received for longitudinal sliding movement inside the profiled rail 14. A rear edge 26 of the slotted guide 16 has an integrally molded a downwardly pointing nose 28. Below the nose 28, a bearing part 30 is received in the profiled rail 14 for horizontal sliding movement. The bearing part 30 carries a drain gutter 32. Immediately below the nose 28, the bearing part 30 features a recess 34 adapted in shape to receive the nose 28. See paragraph [30].

Below the recess 34, the bearing part 30 has a lateral opening for receiving a shaped piece 40 that is connected with a latching hook 44 via a U-shaped leaf spring 42. As shown in Figures 1 and 7, in the fitted condition the latching hook 44 projects from the bearing part 30 forward. See paragraphs [31]- [32].

In the raised position and in the initial position, predefined positions are required for the unit made up of the cover 10, the slotted guide 16 and the parts of the guide mechanism coupled to the slotted guide 16 and for the unit made up of the drain gutter 32 and the bearing part 30 on either side thereof. Any horizontal displacement needs to be prevented at these positions. See paragraph [33].

In the raised position and in the initial position, a lower connecting web 50 of the profiled rail 14 has a local recess 52 for engagement by the latching hook 44 (see Figures 1 and 2). The latching hook 44 is urged downward by the force of the leaf spring 42. In this way the latching hook 44 secures the drain gutter 32 in position horizontally (see also Figure 4). See paragraph [34].

The other unit, comprising the cover 10 along with the slotted guide 16 and the front and rear guide shoes 18, 24, is fixed in position horizontally with a positive locking connection directly between the slotted guide 16 and the profiled rail 14 via corresponding locking portions. In one embodiment, the slotted guide 16 has laterally projecting extensions 70 integrally molded to its side faces (see Figures 1 through 3, 5 and 6a and 6b) close to its swiveling axis A. The laterally projecting extensions 70 protrude into associated local recesses 72 in the upper webs 74 of the profiled rail 14. The positioning and the height of the extensions 70 is such that they will protrude into the recesses 72 in both the raised and the initial positions (Figures 1 and 2) and would strike against the webs 74 if an attempt were made to shift the slotted guide 16 and the cover 10 with it in a horizontal direction. On the other hand, the extensions 70 are positioned such that in the lowered position, they will move below the webs 74 and are then located fully within the space circumscribed by the profiled rail 14 (see Figure 3). See paragraph [35].

The mode of operation of the guide mechanism according to the invention will now be explained. In the initial position, the extensions 70 protrude into the recesses 72 (Figures 2 and 6) so that the slotted guide 16 is prevented from any horizontal displacement along the profiled rail 14. The nose 28 projects into its associated recess 34 in the bearing part 30 so that the unit defined by the slotted guide 16 is positively coupled to the unit defined by the drain gutter 32 in the direction of displacement. The latching hook 44 protrudes into the recess 52 (Figure 4) so that an additional locking arrangement is provided in the initial position. See paragraph [36].

When the cover 10 is to be raised, the rear guide shoe 24 is shifted forward and the sliding block 22, sliding along in the guide track 20, acts to swivel the slotted guide 16 upward (Figure 1). In the fully raised position, when the nose 28 has cleared the recess 34, the unit comprising the slotted guide 16 and the cover 10 is completely decoupled mechanically from the unit including the drain gutter 32. In this position, the two units are locked against horizontal displacement by the associated extensions 70 and by the latching hook 44, respectively. See paragraph [37].

When the cover 10 is to be shifted to the rear, the rear edge 12 thereof needs to move below the level of the edge 11. The rear guide shoe 24 is therefore shifted to the rear (Figure 3). In the lowered position, the extensions 70 will dive below the webs 74, as discussed above (Figure 3). The rear guide shoe 24 is shifted further to the rear so that a wedge-shaped extension 80 thereon, which projects toward the latching hook 44 (Figures 2 and 4), engages lateral tappets 82 provided on the latching hook 44 to move the latter upward into a disengaged position. The two units coupled with each other may now be shifted horizontally together. See paragraph [38].

The subject application includes four independent claims, i.e. claims 1, 11, 13, and 19. Claims 11 and 19 have been allowed, thus only independent claims 1 and 13 will be discussed in detail below.

Independent claim 1 recites a guide mechanism for a movable cover of a roof in a vehicle that includes at least one slotted guide coupled to the cover and which is movable between a raised position, an initial position, and a lowered position. The slotted guide causes the cover to move vertically and includes a first locking portion. The guide mechanism for claim 1 also recites at least one profiled rail that guides the slotted guide horizontally together with the cover along the profiled rail wherein the profiled rail defines a second locking portion. Claim 1 further recites that the first and second locking portions directly engage with each other to directly engage the first locking portion of the slotted guide with the profiled rail when the slotted guide is in the raised position and in the initial position to prevent horizontal displacement of the slotted guide. This is shown in Figures 1 and 2 and described at paragraphs [34]-[37] of the accompanying specification.

Independent claim 13 recites a guide mechanism for a movable cover of a roof in a vehicle that includes at least one slotted guide coupled to the cover and movable between a raised position, an initial position, and a lowered position, wherein the at least one slotted guide causes the cover to move vertically with the at least one slotted guide defining a first locking portion. Claim 13 also recites at least one profiled rail that guides the at least one slotted guide horizontally together with the cover along the at least one profiled rail, the at least one profiled rail defining a second locking portion wherein the first and second locking portions engage with each other to directly engage the slotted guide with the at least one profiled rail when the at least

one slotted guide is in the raised position and in the initial position to prevent horizontal displacement of the at least one slotted guide. The first and second locking portions disengage to move the at least one slotted guide out of locking engagement with the at least one profiled rail when the at least one slotted guide is in the lowered position. Finally, claim 13 also recites a drain gutter disposed at a rear edge of the cover wherein the drain gutter extends generally transversely with respect to the at least one profiled rail, and a bearing part connected to the drain gutter and adapted to be shifted along the at least one profiled rail, wherein the bearing part and the drain gutter are spaced apart from the at least one slotted guide in the raised position. This is best shown in Figures 1-4 and is described in detail at paragraphs [30]-[37].

GROUND OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

Claims 1-6 and 8 stand finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 4,647,104 to Kohlpaintner et al. (Kohlpaintner), optionally in view of United States Patent No. 4,332,416 to Lutz et al. (Lutz).

Claim 7 stands finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 4,647,104 to Kohlpaintner et al. (Kohlpaintner), optionally in view of United States Patent No. 4,332,416 to Lutz et al. (Lutz), and in view of United States Patent No. 4,647,105 to Pollard (Pollard).

Claims 10 and 13-17 stand finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 4,647,104 to Kohlpaintner et al. (Kohlpaintner), optionally in view

of United States Patent No. 4,332,416 to Lutz et al. (Lutz), and in view of United States Patent No. 5,718,472 to Otake et al. (Otake).

ARGUMENT

Obviousness Rejection Over Kohlpaintner and Lutz

Claims 1-6 and 8 stand finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 4,647,104 to Kohlpaintner et al. (Kohlpaintner), optionally in view of United States Patent No. 4,332,416 to Lutz et al. (Lutz).

Claim 1

The examiner argues that Kohlpaintner discloses a guide 14 (disclosed as slotted per the disclosure of Lutz), first locking portion 25 on the guide 14, profiled rail 15 with second locking portion 32, and further discloses direct engagement between the locking portions 25, 32 in both the initial and raised positions. The examiner argues that it would have been obvious “to provide in Kohlpaintner et al. a slot on the guide as taught by Lutz et al. in order to move same.” Appellant respectfully disagrees.

As admitted by the examiner, Kohlpaintner does not disclose a slotted guide as defined in claim 1 and relies on teachings from Lutz to modify Kohlpaintner. When it is necessary to select elements from different references in order to form the claimed invention, there must be some suggestion or motivation to make the selection. Obviousness cannot be established by combining the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention, absent some teaching,

suggestion, or incentive supporting the combination. The extent to which such suggestion must be explicit in, or referred from, the references, is decided on the facts of each application in light of the prior art and its relationship to the claimed invention. It is impermissible to engage in a hindsight reconstruction of the claimed invention, using applicant's structure as a template and selecting elements from the references to fill the gaps. The references themselves must provide some teaching whereby appellant's combination would have been obvious. In re Gorman, 933 F.2d 982, 986, 18 USPQ2d 1885, 1888 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

The examiner has not provided any motivation or suggestion detailing why one of ordinary skill in the art would use a slotted guide from Lutz in the configuration disclosed by Kohlpaintner. The examiner cites col. 3, line 2 of Kohlpaintner to argue that Kohlpaintner discloses a slotted guide as claimed by applicant. Appellant disagrees.

This section of Kohlpaintner states, "Via a drive of a known type that is not shown (such as a drive according to U.S. Pat. No. 4,332,416), the cover 10, starting from the closed position, can be lowered with its rear edge 17 and can then be pushed toward the rear under the fixed part 11 of the roof or, as shown in Figure 2, can be tilted upward above the fixed part 11 of the roof." Col. 3, lines 1-7. There is absolutely no mention of any type of slotted guide. Further, the only structure referred to is the "drive" mechanism of U.S. Pat. No. 4,332,416 (Lutz), i.e. there is no mention of a guiding mechanism of Lutz, which would have any benefit or use in Kohlpaintner.

The examiner's assertion that it would be obvious to include a slot on the guide of Kohlpaintner in order to move the guide is disconcerting for many reasons. First, the assertion implies that the guide link 14 in Kohlpaintner is not capable of moving without having a slot. There is absolutely no support for this assertion. The guide link 14, which is attached to cover

10, is moved by the front 16 and rear (not shown) sliding blocks. Any type of mechanism can be used to drive the sliding blocks. Lutz merely discloses one example of a drive mechanism that drives front and rear sliding blocks 17, 18. There is absolutely no evidence in either Kohlpaintner or Lutz that supports the assertion that guide link 14 must have a slot in order to move.

Second, examiner has not provided sufficient prima facie evidence to support a modification of Kohlpaintner with Lutz. Kohlpaintner was seeking to provide a sliding cover that avoided jamming of the cover at a rear edge of a vehicle roof when the cover was moving between closed, opened, and tilted positions. Kohlpaintner accomplished this by providing a front pin that engages a guide flange fixed to the guide rail when the cover is in a tilted position, and which disengages the guide flange and slides along the guide rail when the cover is moved to an open position underneath a fixed portion of the roof.

The examiner has pointed to no teaching in Lutz of any particular benefit to using the Lutz guide structure in place of the Kohlpaintner guide link 14. The examiner has also not identified any particular benefit in Lutz to support modifying the guide link 14 in Kohlpaintner to include a slot. In addition, there is nothing in Kohlpaintner that would have led one of ordinary skill in the art to believe that Kohlpaintner's guide link 14 was in any way deficient for Kohlpaintner's purposes or was in need of modification, especially as the Kohlpaintner guide link 14 was specifically designed to provide guide link 14 with front and rear pins 25, 19 that cooperate with the guide rail 15 to prevent jamming at a rear edge 17 of the cover 10 when moving to a closed position. Neither reference, nor the prior art in general, provides evidence that supports that assertion that including a slot in the guide link 14 would be beneficial for

Kohlpaintner. One of ordinary skill in the art would have found no reason, suggestion, or incentive for attempting to combine these references so as to arrive at the subject matter of claim 1 other than through the luxury of hindsight accorded one who first viewed appellant's disclosure.

Finally, even if properly combined, Kohlpaintner and Lutz do not teach all of the claimed features of claim 1. Claim 1 requires the slotted guide to have a first locking portion, the profiled rail to define a second locking portion, and recites that the first and second locking portions directly engage with each other to directly engage the first locking portion of slotted guide with the profiled rail when the slotted guide is in the raised position and in the initial position to prevent horizontal displacement of the slotted guide. The examiner argues that the pin 25 and the front guide plate 32 in Kohlpaintner correspond to the first and second locking devices, respectively, with pin 25 and plate 32 being in direct engagement in both the raised and initial positions. Pin 25 does contact plate 32, however, the contact between these two components does not satisfy the claim language set forth in claim 1.

Claim 1 requires the first locking portion of the slotted guide to directly engage the profiled rail. Neither Kohlpaintner nor Lutz discloses this feature. Instead, Kohlpaintner clearly shows the pin 25 and the front guide plate 32 as independent components that act as intermediary connection mechanisms to connect the guide rail 15 and guide link 14. Kohlpaintner clearly indicates that the guide rail 15 and the connecting link 14 themselves are not directly engageable with each other because Kohlpaintner requires other components to be mounted to the guide rail 15 and the connecting link 14 to provide the engagement function (see, e.g., Figure 3; col. 3, lines 33-43 and col. 4, lines 1-25).

Thus, for the many reasons set forth above, the rejection of claims 1-6 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is improper and appellant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

Obviousness Rejection Over Kohlpaintner and Lutz and Pollard

Claim 7 stands finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 4,647,104 to Kohlpaintner et al. (Kohlpaintner), optionally in view of United States Patent No. 4,332,416 to Lutz et al. (Lutz), and in view of United States Patent No. 4,647,105 to Pollard (Pollard).

Claim 7 requires the profiled rail to have a C-shaped profile with upper converging webs, with at least one of the webs having at least one recess.

First, for the reasons set forth above, Kohlpaintner and Lutz do not disclose, suggest, or teach the claimed invention. Pollard does not make up for the deficiencies of Kohlpaintner and Lutz.

Second, there is no motivation or suggestion to modify Kohlpaintner with Pollard. The examiner admits that Kohlpaintner does not disclose the recited C-shaped profile rail. The examiner argues that it would be “obvious to one of ordinary skill to provide in the references above a C-shaped rail as taught by Pollard in order to provide symmetrical support for the roof panel at speed where wind load can be extreme.” Appellant disagrees.

There is no evidence provided by any of the references, or the prior art in general, that links symmetrical support to a C-shaped rail. Further, none of the references discuss any type of improved support that results from using a C-shaped rail to address problems of extreme wind load. Kohlpaintner does not allude to any problems relating to extreme wind loads causing non-

symmetrical support, and further, Pollard does not teach that a C-shaped rail is a solution for support problems relating to wind loads. There is absolutely no evidence in any of the references or prior art to support the examiner's assertion.

Second, examiner has not provided sufficient prima facie evidence to support a modification of Kohlpaintner with Pollard. The examiner has pointed to no teaching in Pollard of any particular benefit to using the Pollard rail in the Kohlpaintner assembly. In addition, there is nothing in Kohlpaintner that would have led one of ordinary skill in the art to believe that Kohlpaintner's rail 15 was in any way deficient for Kohlpaintner's purposes or was in need of modification, especially as Kohlpaintner does not identify any types of problems relating to the wind loads and/or rail support. One of ordinary skill in the art would have found no reason, suggestion, or incentive for attempting to combine these references so as to arrive at the subject matter of claim 7 other than through the luxury of hindsight accorded one who first viewed appellant's disclosure.

Third, even if properly combined, the references do not disclose, suggest, or teach all of the claimed features. None of the references disclose a rail with a C-shaped profile with upper converging webs, with at least one of the webs having at least one recess. The rail in Pollard does not include any type of web structure, let alone disclosing a web having a recess. Further, the examiner has not provided any arguments detailing where these features can be found in Pollard.

Thus, for the many reasons set forth above, the rejection of claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is improper and must be withdrawn.

Obviousness Rejection Over Kohlpaintner and Lutz and Otake

Claims 10 and 13-17 stand finally rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 4,647,104 to Kohlpaintner et al. (Kohlpaintner), optionally in view of United States Patent No. 4,332,416 to Lutz et al. (Lutz), and in view of United States Patent No. 5,718,472 to Otake et al. (Otake).

For the reasons set forth above, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) based on Kohlpaintner and Lutz is improper. Otake does not make up for the deficiencies of Kohlpaintner and Lutz. Additional reasons detailing why the rejection of claims 10 and 13-17, based on Kohlpaintner, Lutz, and Otake, is improper are provided below.

Claim 10

Claim 10 includes the features of a drain gutter disposed at a rear edge of the cover wherein the drain gutter extends generally transversely with respect to the at least one profiled rail, and a bearing part connected to the drain gutter and adapted to be shifted along the at least one profiled rail wherein the bearing part and the drain gutter are spaced apart from the at least one slotted guide in the raised position.

The examiner argues that it would be obvious to provide in Kohlpaintner a drain gutter 21, bearing part supporting spring 23, and a coupling/decoupling 22, 10 as taught by Otake. Appellant disagrees.

The examiner's modification would clearly render Kohlpaintner unsatisfactory for Kohlpaintner's intended purpose and would change the principle of operation of Kohlpaintner. "If the proposed modification would render the prior art invention unsatisfactory for its intended

purpose, then there is no suggestion or motivation to make the proposed modification." MPEP § 2143.02. Modifying Kohlpaintner with Otake as suggested by the examiner would render Kohlpaintner unsatisfactory for its intended purpose because configuring Kohlpaintner with the gutter 21, spring 23, and coupling 22, 10 would interfere with the beneficial hold-down device configuration 19, 25 achieved by Kohlpaintner. Thus, there is no motivation or suggestion to modify Kohlpaintner with Otake.

Claim 13

For the many reasons set forth above with regard to claim 1, the combination of Kohlpaintner and Lutz is improper. Further, for the reasons set forth above with regard to claim 10, there is no suggestion to modify Kohlpaintner with Otake as argued by the examiner.

Finally, even if properly combined, Kohlpaintner, Lutz, and Otake do not teach all of the claimed features of claim 13. Claim 13 requires the slotted guide to define a first locking portion, the profiled rail to define a second locking portion, and recites that the first and second locking portions directly engage with each other to directly engage the slotted guide with the profiled rail when the slotted guide is in the raised position and in the initial position to prevent horizontal displacement of the slotted guide.

The examiner argues that the pin 25 and the front guide plate 32 in Kohlpaintner correspond to the first and second locking devices, respectively, with pin 25 and plate 32 being in direct engagement in both the raised and initial positions. Pin 25 does contact plate 32, however, the contact between these two components does not satisfy the claim language set forth in claim 13.

Claim 13 requires the slotted guide to directly engage the profiled rail. None of the references disclose this feature. Instead, Kohlpaintner clearly shows the pin 25 and the front guide plate 32 as independent components that act as intermediary connection mechanisms to connect the guide rail 15 and guide link 14. Kohlpaintner clearly indicates that the guide rail 15 and the connecting link 14 themselves are not directly engageable with each other because Kohlpaintner requires other components to be mounted to the guide rail 15 and the connecting link 14 to provide the engagement function (see, e.g., Figure 3; col. 3, lines 33-43 and col. 4, lines 1-25).

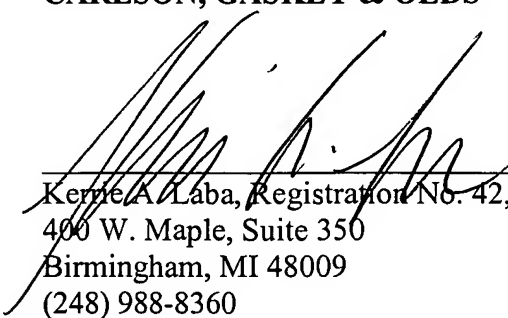
Thus, for the reasons set forth above, the rejection of claims 10 and 13-17 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) is improper and appellant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth above, the rejection of all claims is improper and should be reversed. Appellant earnestly requests such an action.

Respectfully submitted,

CARLSON, GASKEY & OLDS

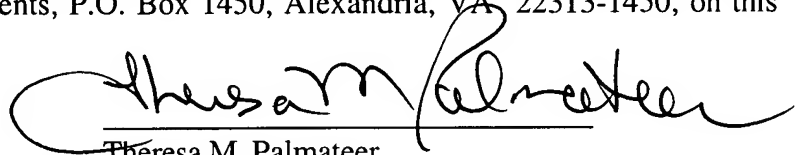


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CERTIFICATE OF MAIL

I hereby certify that the enclosed Appeal Brief is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents, Commission for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on this 25th day of February, 2005.


Theresa M. Palmateer

CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. A guide mechanism for a movable cover of a roof in a vehicle, comprising
at least one slotted guide coupled to the cover and movable between a raised position, an initial position, and a lowered position, wherein said at least one slotted guide causes the cover to move vertically, said at least one slotted guide having a first locking portion; and
at least one profiled rail that guides said at least one slotted guide horizontally together with the cover along said at least one profiled rail, said at least one profiled rail defining a second locking portion,
wherein the first and second locking portions directly engage with each other to directly engage the first locking portion of said at least one slotted guide with said at least one profiled rail when said at least one slotted guide is in the raised position and in the initial position to prevent horizontal displacement of said at least one slotted guide.
2. The guide mechanism as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first and second locking portions engage with each other to lock said at least one slotted guide with said at least one profiled rail when said at least one slotted guide is in the initial position to prevent horizontal displacement of said at least one slotted guide.
3. The guide mechanism as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first and second locking portions disengage to move said at least one slotted guide out of locking engagement with said at least one profiled rail when said at least one slotted guide is in the lowered position.

4. The guide mechanism as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first and second locking portions are sole structures in the guide mechanism for forming a locking engagement between said at least one slotted guide and said at least one profiled rail in the raised position to prevent horizontal rearward displacement of said at least one slotted guide.

5. The guide mechanism as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first locking portion comprises at least one extension on said at least one slotted guide and the second locking portion comprises at least one recess in said at least one profiled rail, wherein said at least one extension and said at least one recess engage in locking engagement to prevent horizontal displacement of said at least one slotted guide.

6. The guide mechanism as claimed in claim 5, further comprising a pivot bearing disposed at a front end of said at least one slotted guide and wherein the extension is provided close to the front end.

7. The guide mechanism as claimed in claim 5, wherein said at least one profiled rail has a C-shaped profile with upper converging webs, wherein at least one of said upper converging webs has said at least one recess.

8. The guide mechanism as claimed in claim 5, wherein the extension extends below the recess when said at least one slotted guide is in the lowered position, and wherein said at least

one profiled rail prevents the extension from rising vertically after said at least one slotted guide is displaced horizontally when in the lowered position.

9. (Cancelled)

10. The guide mechanism as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

a drain gutter disposed at a rear edge of the cover, wherein the drain gutter extends generally transversely with respect to said at least one profiled rail; and

a bearing part connected to the drain gutter and adapted to be shifted along said at least one profiled rail,

wherein the bearing part and the drain gutter are spaced apart from said at least one slotted guide in the raised position.

11. A guide mechanism for a movable cover of a roof in a vehicle, comprising

at least one slotted guide coupled to the cover and movable between a raised position, an initial position, and a lowered position, wherein said at least one slotted guide causes the cover to move vertically, said at least one slotted guide having a first locking portion;

at least one profiled rail that guides said at least one slotted guide horizontally together with the cover along said at least one profiled rail, said at least one profiled rail having a second locking portion,

wherein the first and second locking portions engage with each other to lock said at least one slotted guide with said at least one profiled rail when said at least one slotted guide is in the raised position to prevent horizontal displacement of said at least one slotted guide;

a drain gutter disposed at a rear edge of the cover, wherein the drain gutter extends generally transversely with respect to said at least one profiled rail; and

a bearing part connected to the drain gutter and adapted to be shifted along said at least one profiled rail, wherein, in the initial position and in the lowered position, a portion of said at least one slotted guide engages a portion of the bearing part and is positively coupled thereto in the horizontal direction,

and wherein the bearing part and the drain gutter are spaced apart from said at least one slotted guide in the raised position.

12. The guide mechanism as claimed in claim 11, further comprising a nose molded to a rear edge of said at least one slotted guide, wherein the nose engages a recess in the bearing part.

13. A guide mechanism for a movable cover of a roof in a vehicle, comprising

at least one slotted guide coupled to the cover and movable between a raised position, an initial position, and a lowered position, wherein said at least one slotted guide causes the cover to move vertically, said at least one slotted guide defining a first locking portion;

at least one profiled rail that guides said at least one slotted guide horizontally together with the cover along said at least one profiled rail, said at least one profiled rail defining a second locking portion,

wherein the first and second locking portions engage with each other to directly engage the slotted guide with said at least one profiled rail when said at least one slotted guide is in the raised position and in the initial position to prevent horizontal displacement of said at least one slotted guide, and wherein the first and second locking portions disengage to move said at least one slotted guide out of locking engagement with said at least one profiled rail when said at least one slotted guide is in the lowered position;

a drain gutter disposed at a rear edge of the cover, wherein the drain gutter extends generally transversely with respect to said at least one profiled rail; and

a bearing part connected to the drain gutter and adapted to be shifted along said at least one profiled rail, wherein the bearing part and the drain gutter are spaced apart from said at least one slotted guide in the raised position.

14. The guide mechanism as claimed in claim 13, wherein the first and second locking portions are the sole structures in the guide mechanism for forming a locking engagement between said at least one slotted guide and said at least one profiled rail in the raised position to prevent horizontal rearward displacement of said at least one slotted guide.

15. The guide mechanism as claimed in claim 13, wherein the first locking portion comprises at least one extension on said at least one slotted guide and the second locking portion comprises at least one recess in said at least one profiled rail, wherein the extension and recess engage in locking engagement to prevent horizontal displacement of said at least one slotted guide.

16. The guide mechanism as claimed in claim 15, further comprising a pivot bearing disposed at a front end of said at least one slotted guide, wherein the extension is provided close to the front end.

17. The guide mechanism as claimed in claim 15, wherein the extension extends below the recess when said at least one slotted guide is in the lowered position, and wherein said at least one profiled rail prevents the extension from rising vertically after said at least one slotted guide is displaced horizontally when in the lowered position.

18. (Cancelled)

19. A guide mechanism for a movable cover of a roof in a vehicle, comprising:

at least one slotted guide coupled to the cover and movable between a raised position, an initial position, and a lowered position, wherein said at least one slotted guide causes the cover to move vertically, said at least one slotted guide having a first locking portion;

at least one profiled rail that guides the slotted guide horizontally together with the cover along said at least one profiled rail, said at least one profiled rail having a second locking portion,

wherein the first and second locking portions engage with each other to lock the slotted guide with said at least one profiled rail with a positive fit when said at least one slotted guide is in the raised position and in the initial position to prevent horizontal displacement of said at least one slotted guide, and wherein the first and second locking portions disengage to move said at

least one slotted guide out of locking engagement with said at least one profiled rail when said at least one slotted guide is in the lowered position;

a drain gutter disposed at a rear edge of the cover, wherein the drain gutter extends transversely with respect to the vehicle;

a bearing part connected to the drain gutter and adapted to be shifted along said at least one profiled rail, wherein the bearing part and the drain gutter are spaced apart from said at least one slotted guide in the raised position; and

a nose molded to a rear edge of said at least one slotted guide, wherein, in the initial position and in the lowered position, the nose engages the bearing part to positively couple said at least one slotted guide and the bearing part in the horizontal direction.

20-21. (Cancelled)